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President	Mr. Cunningham	(United States of America)
Members	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Donghua
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
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	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Agenda

The situation in Guinea following recent attacks along its borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/434).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-37081 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of the former International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) President, Judge Laïty Kama

The President: At the outset of this meeting, I should like, on behalf of the members of the Security Council, to express profound sorrow at the death of Judge Laïty Kama, who served as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda from 1995 to 1999. At the time of his death, he was serving as the Presiding Judge in one of the trial chambers of the Tribunal. Judge Kama was highly respected by his fellow judges and was regarded as a father figure and a leader who played a crucial role in the formative years of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

On this sad occasion, I should like to convey to the Government and the people of Senegal and to the bereaved family the Council's profound condolences.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea following recent attacks along its borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/434)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Ms. McAskie to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council transmitting the report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, document S/2001/434.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2001/353, which contains the text of a letter dated 11 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the final communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, held in Abuja on 11 April 2001.

Today the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Guéhenno, Ms. McAskie and Mr. Fall.

At the end of those briefings, I will give the floor to Council members who wish to make comments or ask questions. I should like to invite them to indicate to the Secretariat if they wish to take the floor.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Guéhenno: As requested, I would like to brief the Security Council on recent developments in Sierra Leone and in the subregion, including progress in the forward deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), various meetings involving the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and actions taken or being envisaged by the parties and by UNAMSIL in implementing the decisions of the recent review meeting of the Abuja ceasefire Agreement.

First, I will touch on the political developments. Since our last briefing to the Security Council, the major political development was the meeting in Abuja on 2 May 2001 of ECOWAS, the United Nations, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF to review the implementation of the Abuja ceasefire Agreement. The review meeting was preceded on 1 May by a meeting of the United Nations-ECOWAS-Government of Sierra Leone coordination mechanism.

The review meeting was chaired by the Foreign Minister of Mali and attended by UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone, and an RUF delegation led by Omrie Golley, Chairman of the RUF Political and Peace Council. The meeting, which was held in a frank but cordial atmosphere, resulted in a number of important conclusions and decisions, as follows.

It was concluded that the ceasefire Agreement had been largely observed, but that the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) had violated it by attacking the RUF in Tongo on 19 April. The Government of Sierra Leone should exert the necessary control over the CDF in order to avert future attacks which could jeopardize the peace process. The Government of Sierra Leone was called upon to extend its authority throughout the country in the wake of UNAMSIL's deployment.

There was a renewed commitment by the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF to remove all roadblocks in areas under their control. The RUF pledged to return, by 30 May 2001, all weapons and equipment it had seized from UNAMSIL and ECOMOG.

The meeting called for the simultaneous disarmament of the CDF and the RUF, and a decision was taken to set up a joint committee comprising UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, to meet in Freetown on 15 May to develop a firm timetable and modalities for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The meeting also called on the RUF to release all abductees, in particular child combatants, and called on the two parties to create an atmosphere conducive to the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

The review meeting also decided that in order to stop the RUF incursions and the Guinean attacks, the RUF would withdraw all its combatants from the Kambia district and allow the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) to deploy there. UNAMSIL, accompanied by unarmed RUF observers, would mount increased patrols in the district. The withdrawing RUF combatants would be disarmed and screened for absorption into the Sierra Leone army.

Confidence-building measures reached at the meeting include the Government of Sierra Leone's declared intention and preparedness to address the RUF's political concerns, including releasing some detained RUF officials; facilitating the complete certification of the RUF as a political party; and providing land or office space to the party in Freetown and in the provinces.

The Abuja meeting constitutes a step in the right direction. Obviously, the right balance will have to be struck between giving the RUF the opportunity to transform itself into a political entity, and maintaining a strong posture for UNAMSIL. On balance, we believe that, if properly implemented by both sides in good faith, the Abuja meeting has the potential to create the confidence needed to make further progress. It is a first step.

The Government has set up a high-ranking task force to oversee the implementation of the Abuja meeting. The members of this task force will also represent the Government at the meeting on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme with the RUF, to be held tomorrow. The RUF, in a meeting with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Adeniji last Friday, 11 May, reaffirmed its commitments, but also stressed the need for more confidence-building measures. It also said it was ready to welcome the deployment of the Sierra Leone police in the areas now under the RUF's control.

During the period under review, ECOWAS leaders actively pursued their efforts to advance the peace process in Sierra Leone. On 11 April, an Extraordinary Summit meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State was held in Abuja. That meeting called on the Security Council to authorize and assist the deployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) forces along the borders of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. It also set up a mediation committee, comprising the Presidents of Mali, Nigeria and Togo, to encourage dialogue between the Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and it decided to dispatch an ECOWAS mission to Liberia on 18 April to assess Liberia's compliance with the Security Council's demands in resolution 1343 (2001). I understand that the Permanent Representative of Mali has kept the Security Council well informed of these important developments.

(*spoke in French*)

I should now like to touch on follow-up actions by the parties and by UNAMSIL. In a meeting held at Makeni on 6 May, the RUF military leaders unanimously endorsed the Abuja decisions and established committees to oversee follow-up

implementation of these decisions. In subsequent meetings with UNAMSIL, RUF representatives reiterated their leaders' commitment to withdraw from Kambia on 18 May, to release at least 200 child combatants by 25 May, and to return all seized weapons by 30 May. These undertakings by the RUF are a positive development that need to be encouraged and very closely followed up.

It is worth noting that the withdrawal of all RUF combatants from the Kambia district would facilitate efforts at repatriating Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea so that they can return home. Such a withdrawal would also set a positive precedent for the withdrawal of the RUF from other areas, particularly the diamond-producing areas.

On 9 May, UNAMSIL organized a meeting with the Government of Sierra Leone to prepare for the 15 May meeting between the RUF, the Government of Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL, which will clarify modalities and establish a firm timetable for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, in keeping with a decision taken at the review meeting of the Abuja ceasefire Agreement.

Turning to the deployment of UNAMSIL in areas being held by the RUF, I should like to inform the Council that, in keeping with its concept of operations, UNAMSIL deployed into RUF-held areas, notably Lunsar, Makeni and Magburaka, between 7 and 23 April. UNAMSIL has also continued to conduct long-range patrols into these areas, including three patrols to the Kono district, two of which took place at night, enabling the area to be approached from both the west and the east. One patrol was conducted from Magburaka to Koidu, Konkoworo, Saima and Koardu, which is 2 kilometres from the Guinea border. From the east, the Guinean battalion patrolled from Daru to Bumumbu, Benda Juma, Gandahun and Woama. Long-range patrols were also carried out three times to Kailahun from Daru, as well as to Buedu.

The local people have warmly welcomed UNAMSIL's deployment and patrols, which had an immediate and very positive effect on economic activities in the areas concerned and on the return of displaced persons. UNAMSIL is considering the establishment of a permanent presence in Kambia and Koidu.

The Pakistani contingent should start deploying at the end of this month, with the arrival of an advance party of 900 men. There will be several elements in the Pakistani brigade, and the full contingent of about 4,500 should be on the ground by early September. The Secretariat is also reviewing offers by Nepal and Senegal, in particular with regard to the equipment of their possible contingents.

(*spoke in English*)

I would now like to turn now to some ceasefire violations. UNAMSIL has received reports of clashes between the CDF and the RUF near Tongo fields on 19 April, and at Talia, 9 kilometres east of Mano Junction, on 6 May. UNAMSIL's investigations of the first report of a ceasefire violation determined that the RUF repelled an attack by CDF forces. At present, the situation in the area has been stabilized, and civilians that had fled to Kenema and Mano Junction have started returning to their villages. UNAMSIL is still investigating the second report of ceasefire violations.

Reportedly, the CDF had received orders from its leadership in Freetown to recapture the Kono district from the RUF. It should be borne in mind that the Kono district is a key diamond-producing area. The RUF has claimed that CDF attacks on their position in the Kono district were carried out with the assistance of Guinean forces. UNAMSIL has also received reports of artillery and helicopter gunship attacks by Guinean forces on RUF positions near the Sierra Leone-Guinea border. It is hoped that the withdrawal of the RUF from Kambia will bring these attacks to an end in that area. In the meantime, we call on all parties involved to exercise maximum restraint.

The extension of the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone throughout the country has continued. Members of the Council may recall that, in his ninth report on UNAMSIL, the Secretary-General stressed that the ongoing deployment of UNAMSIL troops is being undertaken for the principal purpose of facilitating the restoration of Government authority throughout Sierra Leone. As a result of UNAMSIL's constant pressure on the RUF, Government education and medical officials have conducted assessment visits, and national school examinations will soon be conducted in Makeni and elsewhere. The RUF also agreed to, and actually called for, the deployment of the Sierra Leone police force in Lunsar. The postal service is also in the process of being restored in Lunsar. However, the lack of resources and capacity on

the part of the Government remains a major constraint in the efforts to extend civil administration.

With regard to human rights, UNAMSIL forward deployment upcountry also involved the opening of the first human rights office in Kenema. This is part of the efforts to establish a permanent human rights presence in the provinces to undertake, *inter alia*, monitoring, reporting, training and capacity-building in human rights and international law, with emphasis on the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In this regard, it is our intention to augment the human rights section of UNAMSIL from 14 to 20 professionals.

Significant progress has been made towards establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with an initial assessment of the 54 nominations received for the four national positions, and the impending convening by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of his statutory advisers, representing the Inter-religious Council, the Council of Paramount Chiefs and the international community based in Sierra Leone. These advisers will assist him in drawing up a shortlist.

Meanwhile, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has identified three persons considered suitable as international members of the Commission and is currently ascertaining their availability. UNAMSIL is also working with human rights non-governmental organizations that have formed a TRC working group, in order to reinforce the feeling of local ownership. A sensitization campaign on the TRC is also under way.

On the issue of HIV/AIDS, I would like to point out that the United Nations is stepping up its efforts to raise the awareness of the troops on the ground with regard to the risks of HIV/AIDS. UNAMSIL has conducted sensitization seminars for its troops and distributed condoms throughout the force and will shortly be distributing HIV/AIDS awareness cards designed specifically for peacekeepers, in coordination with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Finally, I should like to refer to my colleagues in the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Carolyn McAskie, who will brief members on the recommendations of the recent Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa and Ms. McAskie's mission to the countries of the Mano River Union, respectively.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Ms. McAskie: I am very pleased indeed to brief the Council on my recent mission, particularly in conjunction with my colleagues Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Fall, as I think this is a good example of how all parts of the United Nations Secretariat are working very closely to address the very complex situation that is developing in that region.

In accordance with the Council's request, we attempted to provide some maps through the use of the overhead projector, but this room does not lend itself to that; we tried, but they were absolutely impossible to read. We do have a map handout, which I have been told will be with us in a moment. I will have that circulated, hopefully while we are speaking.

Between 17 and 25 April, I visited the three Mano River Union countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The primary objective of the mission was to make an assessment of the humanitarian situation in the subregion and to evaluate the humanitarian coordination mechanisms among and within the three countries of the Mano River Union. This was seen as essential in view of the regional dimension of the present crisis, the recent changes to the structure of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), as well as the findings of the visit undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the recent interdisciplinary mission to West Africa led by my colleague, Mr. Fall. In addition, the Secretary-General requested that, during my visit, I collect views and information relevant to this Council's request for a response to paragraph 9 of its resolution 1346 (2001), in particular on the question of how to take forward the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons in and around Sierra Leone, including their return to safe areas.

I was accompanied by one of our major donors, Ambassador Marika Fahlén, the Swedish Ambassador for humanitarian affairs, along with staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I should add that I found it extremely useful for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to travel to a

country such as Sierra Leone, where there is a major peacekeeping mission, and I am recommending that we do this more often.

In Guinea, we benefited from the fact that we arrived at the same time as the United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development, Ms. Claire Short, and Mr. Charles Josselin, French Minister for Francophonie and Cooperation, who were visiting the region. Again, this was very useful.

I met with senior officials of all three Governments: in Guinea, the Prime Minister; in Sierra Leone, the Minister for Foreign Affairs; and in Liberia, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Planning and the Joint Presidential Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. In all three countries, I consulted, of course, as usual, with the United Nations country team, non-governmental organizations, local civil society and the media.

It is painfully evident that the regional approach being developed is absolutely the right one, particularly among the three countries of the Mano River Union. The major finding of my mission is the extent to which the crisis in each of the three countries is fuelling crises in the neighbouring countries. There is not a single border that is not affected, exacerbating the humanitarian crises with humanitarian consequences and making it painfully evident that the solutions to these crises must be looked at in an interrelated way.

Let me deal specifically with the three countries, very briefly. In Guinea, we found a nation which, after years of dealing with the spillover from the war in Sierra Leone and the cost of that, is now, unfortunately, facing a humanitarian crisis of its own, with numbers of between 200,000 and 300,000 internally displaced persons. The further deterioration of the situation in Liberia may well increase that number. We travelled to the Languette area — or Parrot's Beak, as it is known in Sierra Leone — Kissidougou and Gueckedou, and we visited camps in the region, including transit centres in Conakry.

What was painfully obvious, in addition to the regional nature of the crisis, was the fact that there is a real dearth of strategic information from one country to the next. We found that the lack of information inside Guinea as to what the situation is in neighbouring countries has often given rise to proposals for the full return of refugees to their countries of origin. Our assessment is that conditions for a return to Sierra Leone or Liberia do not exist at this time. We were very pleased to receive assurances from the Guinean Government that it is fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Convention for refugees and, in fact, is working very closely with UNHCR in its two-track approach. The two-track approach, of course, is the dual one of assisting refugees close to the border to relocate to secure areas deeper within Guinea, while providing assistance to those who are making their way voluntarily across the borders. In fact, UNHCR, with the full support of the Government of Guinea, has the exercise of moving refugees away from the Languette well under way; 40,000 have been relocated so far and they anticipate completing that some time within the next 10 days.

What we found, however, is that this relocation, along with news of an improved situation in Sierra Leone, has also spurred an increase in attempts by some to return to southern Sierra Leone via areas held by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This is placing an enormous burden on the humanitarian community and in fact is creating serious difficulties for the refugees, who find that their return home is not an easy one. Refugees are being stopped as they cross through RUF territory, as the RUF is intent on registering them. We heard first-hand reports of goods being stolen and the United Nations on the ground is investigating the claims made by international non-governmental organizations that refugees have, in fact, actually been attacked.

Within Sierra Leone, I would say that there are five main issues which characterize the humanitarian situation. First, the community is trying to deal with the spontaneous returnees, including those who returned under a planned programme from Conakry to Freetown. About 55,000 have returned so far and we expect that those numbers could easily reach 100,000 over the next few weeks. The resettlement of internally displaced persons in their own villages that are now safe has begun, but, in addition, there is the potential for further displacement as the RUF withdraws from Kambia Continued relief will be needed for some 400,000 internally displaced persons within the country. Now, in an unfortunate irony, Sierra Leone is having to deal with an influx of Liberian refugees across the border into areas to which the humanitarian community has judged there to be no room for Sierra Leone refugees to return. Thus, we are trying to stop the flow of refugees from Sierra Leone into the south-

eastern part of the country and yet we are now faced with a potential influx of Liberians across the Mano River itself.

Within Sierra Leone, it will be recalled that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General was recently appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator within UNAMSIL. This was a difficult decision, but is, in my mind, a very positive development. The Humanitarian Coordinator will need, however, to work very closely with those members of the humanitarian community who are non-United Nations to assure the broader humanitarian community that this does not mean any reduction of attention to their needs. The current individual has been requested to report back once he has been on the job for a few weeks, with a view to determining whether the presence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should be strengthened in support, given the fact that the Deputy Special Representative carries with his title a very long list of complex responsibilities, including issues relating to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and to governance.

What we found is that, over the past few months, there has developed a noticeably improved relationship between UNAMSIL and the humanitarian community, and we were very pleased to acknowledge this. The humanitarian operations have benefited somewhat from UNAMSIL logistics capacity. This is welcomed and we would look for opportunities to increase it.

The mission visited camps for internally displaced persons. We saw the first internally displaced persons returning to their own villages — a real sign of hope. We visited one of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps, though it had very few people in it, and we saw, in the South-West, some returned refugees being resettled in areas which are not their homeland, as their homes in the North are still behind RUF lines.

In Makeni, we met with the RUF leadership, Issa Sesay and his colleagues. The message that we gave to the RUF from the point of view of the humanitarians was to request free and safe access for humanitarian staff and freedom to undertake assessments and provide assistance without escort in these areas. I made it clear that the ability of the humanitarian community to access areas behind the RUF line would require not just their word, as they insisted that we would be safe, but tangible proof that this would be the case, as we have not, as members know, had good experiences in the past.

One of the issues we raised as a sign of good faith is the release of the child soldiers, as well as the girls. Whenever we talk about the child soldiers, I have asked the humanitarian community also to emphasize that girls are being abducted.

I just had word this morning that, apparently, the RUF has released 97 children to the non-governmental organization Caritas, in Makeni. I do not know how many are boys and how many are girls, but this first release of 97 children is a very good sign.

One of the issues for Sierra Leone that will be extremely difficult, with the strengthening of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the hope for a return to a secure environment within the country, is the extent to which the Government will be able to resume services. The humanitarian community is already extremely overstretched; we have received about 25 per cent of the funds requested in the consolidated appeal, and we have been making another appeal for funds to assist in the humanitarian effort. What we have to remember is that, as the Government tries to restore services, government workers themselves are among the displaced: in the refugee camps in Guinea you find professionals and government workers, and the Government, at number 175, is already the lowest on the Human Development Index scale. That, plus the ravages of war, will mean that plans to reinstate government services as UNAMSIL moves forward will require enormous assistance to the Government: capacity-building and resources.

The situation in Liberia — unlike that in Sierra Leone, where you could say that there are strong signs of hope — is more one of growing despair. The sense was that the political and military situation was rapidly deteriorating. The Mission itself, in fact, remained in Monrovia as it was unsafe to travel to areas affected by the crisis. Newly displaced persons were featured on the front pages of the local papers every day, along with the country's preoccupation with the sanctions, particularly as we were there just a few days after the visit of the Chairman of the Council's sanctions Committee, Ambassador Mahbubani. We met with opposition parties as well as with members of the Mano River Women's Peace Network, all of whom are

seriously concerned about the possibilities of Liberia falling back into a state of civil war. It was reported to us that the two main rebel groups, ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J, which in the past have been fighting each other, had formed an alliance and that in response President Taylor is mobilizing the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, the group that was disarmed in 1997 and 1998.

There is fighting all along the border of northern Lofa county — the county that borders South-East Sierra Leone and South-West Guinea. That fighting has increased the number of internally displaced within Liberia; the figure we have been given is between 60,000 and 80,000, of which one third to one half have been created in the past three to four weeks. The Liberian Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission estimates that there are still, in addition, some 160,000 Liberian refugees in the region and about 75,000 Sierra Leone refugees in Liberia, of whom about 50 per cent are receiving assistance from UNHCR, while the rest are inaccessible. As I mentioned, some of the Liberians are now fleeing across the Mano river into Sierra Leone, and it is conceivable that some Sierra Leone refugees within Liberia may possibly return with them. The Government is appealing for assistance, and Liberia was covered in the West African regional consolidated appeal, which was launched a month and a half ago at Geneva. But so far we have received a very small amount: about 8 per cent of that appeal has been funded so far.

Let me mention one or two quick conclusions, and then one or two recommendations from the visit. First of all, I have thrown out a lot of numbers. The numbers are extremely confusing; they change from week to week, they change as people move; and they change as we get better access and as we estimate better. So I apologize if the numbers that members have now are not the numbers they had before; that is the reason: when you are dealing with problems of displacement, that is the risk we run. The overall estimate, however, is that with refugees and displaced persons, we are dealing with something between 1 million and 1.5 million people in the three countries of the Mano River Union.

As I said at the outset, the Mission confirmed the need for the United Nations to address the situation in that part of the world from a perspective fully informed by the regional dynamic. An understanding of the regional interplay among the three countries members of the Mano River Union is critical to addressing the volatile humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone, Liberia and now, unfortunately, Guinea.

In that connection, we confirmed that coordination, information exchange and analysis required strengthening not just on a country basis but on a regional basis. Assistance needs are still extremely high, not just for refugees but for the growing number of internally displaced persons.

While events in Sierra Leone give cause for encouragement, developments in the two neighbouring countries give much cause for concern. And the encouraging news in Sierra Leone brings its own problems: the problems of the reinstatement of Government authority and the enormous costs that will go along with that if we are to sustain the growing security in the country.

In terms of the recommendations of the Mission, it is our recommendation that a subregional capacity should be established by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to provide mechanisms to facilitate the exchange and analysis of strategic information, including Geographical Information System (GIS) data, on developments in the subregion between the United Nations and its partners in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and to support subregional contingency planning and resource-mobilization efforts. That presence should be linked to the proposed United Nations office for West Africa, although, depending on the ultimate location of that office, the OCHA element need not be co-located with the political office, as the OCHA office must be based in one of the countries in crisis.

There is also an urgent need to enable United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide aid to internally displaced persons and host communities through funding of the consolidated appeal process for West Africa and UNHCR. I would also add that there is a need for donors to support the Mano River Women's Peace Network as part of the effort. We talk a lot about the role of women in peace-building, and here we have an opportunity to do something practical about it.

In addition, OCHA will strengthen its presence in Guinea and in Liberia, and recommends very strongly that the international community continue to support

UNHCR's two-track approach for Sierra Leone refugees in Guinea.

Finally, pending the resolution of the mechanism to ensure increased access to UNAMSIL logistics capacity for humanitarian actors, we are calling on donors to increase their support for the World Food Programme (WFP) logistics operation in Sierra Leone. The relief agencies use WFP helicopters for assessments and medical evacuations.

Finally, funding is needed also to build the Government's capacity to extend basic services to newly liberated areas. The grave situation of internally displaced persons, refugees and other vulnerable communities is exacerbated by endemic poverty and inadequate government capacity, as well as by the chronically low international response to appeals for international assistance.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): Members of the Council will recall that on 10 April, following the Mission I had the privilege of leading to West Africa, I had a first opportunity to brief the Council on that Mission and to share the details of its terms of reference, its planning, its unfolding, and its major findings.

We have often described the West African project as consisting of three essential aspects: the Mission itself, the report and, finally, the implementation of the recommendations. We could say that today we are at the most critical phase of this three-part project. That is, the time has come to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

This is why the Task Force that was set up by the Secretary-General even before sending the Mission to West Africa is in the process of continuing to meet and reviewing the practical ways and means of implementing the recommendations. This is also why we have been in communication with the major potential partners and have sought their viewpoints on the implementation of the recommendations so that from the outset there can be a dialogue with all those involved in implementing the Mission's recommendations.

The recommendations that have been submitted to the Council cover several aspects. Some of them come within the direct purview of the Security Council, and today I would like to focus my briefing on the recommendations that are of direct interest to the Security Council. Our departments, services and agencies are currently identifying who can be responsible for which recommendations, in accordance with what timetable and on the basis of what practical modalities.

In this connection, I would like to emphasize three categories of recommendations that are of direct interest to the Security Council. The first is recommendations on the impact of conflicts on four West African countries, most of which are to be found in the Mano River Union. Thus, I think that these recommendations are complementary to the briefings just made by my colleagues. The second category of recommendations includes institutional arrangements made by the Inter-Agency Mission. Finally, the third category of recommendations relates to issues that transcend borders and that call for the Security Council's special attention.

The first category relates primarily to the current deadlock in the dialogue among the various heads of State in the Mano River subregion. The Council will recall that, as Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno has just said, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) recently held a summit in Abuja, and it established a mediation committee at the level of heads of State, including those of Mali, Togo and Nigeria. These heads of State were chosen because Mr. Konaré is the current Chairman of ECOWAS, Mr. Eyadema is the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Mr. Obasanjo is the President of the country most involved in peacekeeping in West Africa. I must note that, in spite of this initiative, it has not yet been possible to have the three heads of State sit down at the same table for discussions. Even the idea of organizing a preparatory meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of these three countries has not received a positive response from all the potential partners. This means that the situation has continued to deteriorate since the time of the Mission that I led to West Africa. In the report we suggest that the members of the Security Council, together with the members of ECOWAS, see to it that such a dialogue can be established. That is why I reiterate this recommendation, especially to members of the Security Council that might have some influence on one or more of the heads of State concerned. It is obvious that the

deteriorating military situation, especially with the worsening of the situation in Liberia, now allows us, paradoxically, to begin a dialogue on a basis that might be much more durable. Along with this, it would be desirable for the Security Council once again to appeal to and urge the three heads of State to open a dialogue.

The second aspect focused on in the report is the situation in Sierra Leone. After the briefings given by my two colleagues, I shall not address the relaunching of the peace process or the humanitarian situation, except perhaps to emphasize that within the framework of the outcome of the recent Abujan Summit, which has opened there a window of opportunity for relaunching the peace process, it is important to plan elections in Sierra Leone at the end of the year, taking into account all dimensions and implications. In fact, the Mission was of the view that due to the prevailing situation in Sierra Leone it was, at the very least, premature to consider organizing elections in Sierra Leone by the end of the year, for much of the country is under de facto rule by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and much of the population consists of internally displaced persons and refugees abroad.

Regarding Guinea, the Mission suggested the holding of an international conference to mobilize funds in order to help Guinea cope with its humanitarian and social situation. The Council will recall that in 1999 an initial round table was held. Unfortunately, the plan to hold a second international conference did not materialize, first of all because of the prevailing political situation in Guinea, and also because of the deteriorating situation in the Mano River Union. The Mission is of the view that in the face of the current threat to stability in the country, and because of the long-standing impact of refugees there, where they make up as much as 10 per cent of the total population, Guinea, which furthermore has been making outstanding efforts to improve its macroeconomic situation — as the Bretton Woods institutions acknowledge — deserves greater support. This is why the Mission reiterates its proposal to hold such an international conference.

With regard to Guinea-Bissau, which is geographically outside the Mano River Union, the prevailing precarious and unstable situation in the country resulted from a lengthy crisis that occurred in three stages — the overthrow of the legal Government of President Nino, the establishment of a long period of transition dominated by the military and, finally, the organization of presidential and legislative elections to install a new regime — and has left its mark on the economic and social structure of the country. Political instability in particular continues. There is also economic instability due, on the one hand, to the decline of the country's resources, especially the price of cashews, which has fallen 40 per cent on the international market, and further, to the fact that donors have not followed up the commitment they made in 1998 to assist the country. The situation is extremely fragile. We believe that because of this, and because of the traditional conditions imposed by financial institutions on countries emerging from crises, it is important to organize an international conference on financing for development and for urgent humanitarian needs in Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, with regard to Côte d'Ivoire, the Mission determined that the economic situation should be taken into account not just as it exists in the country but also as it has effects beyond its borders. That is to say, account must be taken of the economic impact of the Côte d'Ivoire on other countries of the subregion in general and on those of the West African Economic and Monetary Union in particular, as Côte d'Ivoire's economy represents 40 per cent of the economic power of the Union. That is why the Mission proposed here that — in tandem with the pressure and influence exerted upon the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to bring it to engage effectively in a dialogue leading to national reconciliation — it is important to ensure that the economic and financial crisis of Côte d'Ivoire not be made worse so as not to further exacerbate its effect on the Economic and Monetary Union. That is also why we have also called here for assistance from the international community.

It turns out that since our Mission ended, the international commission of inquiry set up by the Secretary-General has also returned to New York. It is now in the process of drafting its report and conclusions on the grave violations of human rights that took place during the presidential election. The commission believes that it should be able to submit its report by the end of the month. Nothing in the talks we have had with the Chairman of the commission interferes with the proposal our Mission has made for the holding of a meeting in support of Côte d'Ivoire.

Those are the recommendations in the first category. With regard to recommendations in the second category — namely, those having to do with

institutional arrangements — there are essentially two types.

First of all, the Mission proposed the establishment of a United Nations office for West Africa. This is the logical result of the overall approval garnered for the idea the Council itself initiated after its mission to the countries of the Mano River Union last October. The mission received guidelines from the Secretary-General to consider an overall subregional and integrated approach to West Africa's problems, rather than continuing to act on a sectoral and country-by-country basis. Following the general approval for such an approach, we proposed the establishment of a United Nations office for West Africa. The competencies of that office were clearly set out in the report and in the recommendations, so I do not feel there is a need to revisit them.

Since the Mission took place we have shared the report with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the World Bank, the European Union, United Nations country teams in the field and other partners. We have done so in order to get their views, observations and recommendations with regard to implementing the proposal to create a United Nations office for West Africa. Of course, comments and concerns may be expressed with regard to the risk of bureaucratization of that office. The Mission has clearly thought about all the implications of setting up such an office. The office should have as its principal role gathering, harmonizing and using the synergies that exist between United Nations bodies already in the field and other partners so as to create the dynamics for an overall, integrated approach to cope with West Africa's priority needs. This is why the Mission believes that the office should not simply be an office that swallows up funds, but one which would have the minimum number of necessary staff. We hope that the Council will express to the Secretary-General its support for the creation of the office.

The second recommendation of an institutional nature is to create an inter-agency working group. As I have said, such a group already existed before the Mission's trip to the field. But there is today a need to give it a much more solid foundation, as there is a need to deal with the economic and financial consequences of such an expanded base.

Those are the institutional recommendations. I now come to the last category of recommendations, those having to do with the most important trans-border questions.

The first recommendation has to do with peacekeeping and security operations in the Mano River Union region. In that regard, during our Mission we took note of concerns expressed by ECOWAS heads of State facing the need to envisage, in the overall context of an integrated approach, the peacekeeping and security operations in particular in the region of the Mano River Union, in a way that takes the interrelationships into account. I need not repeat here what was said by Ms. McAskie, who a while ago stressed the need to take into account the humanitarian aspect in this interrelationship and who believed that it would be difficult to deal with humanitarian problems on a country-by-country basis.

It is exactly in that context that we must place the proposal made by several of our interlocutors, and which we echo, to expand the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to include Guinea and Liberia. According to those with whom we spoke, doing so would not only help in dealing with the problems of Sierra Leone but would also create the necessary conditions for monitoring the situation on the borders between Guinea and Sierra Leone and Guinea and Liberia.

The Mission had no doubts about the very controversial nature of this proposal and felt itself duty-bound to report on it to those concerned. Since our arrival, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs have worked together on this idea, which will require further analysis. But we should recall once again that the proposal was made in the context of an integrated subregional approach, which was the reason why our mission was sent to the field.

The second recommendation concerns national reconciliation. Many of us have noted that, in most of the countries of West Africa, it is the absence of dialogue and national reconciliation that has led to marginalization and exclusion, which in turn are conducive not only to triggering conflicts but also to aggravating existing ones.

For all of these reasons, we believe that the United Nations Office for West Africa should focus its conflict-prevention and conflict-settlement activities on

the issue of national reconciliation. In this connection, we were struck by the decisive contribution made by women's movements to the promotion of negotiated settlements, in particular among member States of the Mano River Union. In her report, Ms. McAskie stressed the role of women's organizations, so I do not need to dwell on this any further.

I would, however, like to note that goodwill is the only resource available to these women's organizations. They are cruelly lacking in funds and in capacity. Aware of the impact they might have on the process of the prevention and settlement of conflicts, I cannot fail to appeal to the international community as a whole, and to the Council in particular, for consistent assistance to these civil society groups.

The third element is disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Our mission was struck by the criticism made in West Africa of the United Nations. It was said that we tended to arrive too late and to adopt mandates that were not in keeping with realities, and that, as soon as a peace agreement was concluded, we were too hasty in withdrawing. Finally, and most importantly, it was said that the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement process was very often botched because of a lack of financial resources.

Those we spoke with noted that, both in Liberia and in Sierra Leone, the aborted disarmament and demobilization process was one of the reasons for the resumption, prolongation or worsening of conflicts in West Africa. Indeed, abandoned to their fate, the ex-combatants, most of them young people, after a few months' wait have no other option than to take up arms once again. Moreover, in an economic environment of absolute poverty, if a consistent reinsertion and rehabilitation programme is not contemplated, there is a real risk that the international community, rather than being part of the solution to the problem, could be responsible for its aggravation.

That is why we appeal for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to be considered in a much broader context. It should be considered from a geographical perspective, so as to involve countries that are interconnected, as is the case with the Mano River Union, but also from an economic and social perspective, in order to contemplate the long- and medium-term reinsertion, of the former combatants, especially young boys and girls.

In this connection, I should like to remind the Council that one of the conclusions reached the Abuja meeting, to which Mr. Guéhenno has just referred, concerns the resumption of the demobilization and disarmament process in Sierra Leone, and the fact that perhaps lessons should be learned, so that this time sufficient resources can be allocated to this process.

The next element concerns the proliferation of arms. This is a well-known issue, and, as we are only a few weeks away from the holding here in New York of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, let us simply recall the efforts made in West Africa by ECOWAS in the framework of its moratorium to stop the circulation of arms and monitor them.

That is why the mission proposed that States Members of the United Nations, and in particular members of the Security Council, become more involved with ECOWAS in this process. The mission even proposed that sanctions be considered against those States that might contravene this moratorium, be they States in the subregion or States that provide arms outside the region.

The penultimate point on which specific cross-border proposals have been made is the problem of peacekeeping operations. Here we wish to emphasize in particular the circumstances under which several West African countries have been urged to take part in peacekeeping operations. In this connection, we wish to reiterate what was said by most of those we spoke with: that the United Nations propose to West African countries, when they take part in peacekeeping operations, that they choose the option whereby it is up to the countries themselves to provide troops, but up to the United Nations to provide the equipment. This is what we call "dry" leasing. This option is much more in keeping with the financial resources available to the countries of the subregion. Experience in Sierra Leone has shown that those countries that opted for "wet" leasing were not able to comply with their obligations regarding equipment levels.

Since our arrival, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been considering this issue, with a view to further discussions. We hope that those discussions will give rise to proposals that might finally solve this problem — which, as a matter of fact, is often used as a reason for saying that West African

countries do not have the necessary equipment to take part in peacekeeping operations.

Finally, a last proposal on cross-border matters. The United Nations Office in West Africa should strongly focus on the question of good governance and human rights, especially in the context of the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and of post-conflict peace-building. Indeed, human rights violations and poor governance often serve as the trigger for crises. In this context, it is important for the United Nations office, working together with ECOWAS institutions, to play a much more active role in terms of preventive diplomacy.

Those are a few of the major recommendations made by the Mission that I had the honour of leading — recommendations relating to the countries particularly affected by the crisis in West Africa, recommendations of an institutional nature, and cross-border recommendations on priority issues in West Africa.

The President: I thank Mr. Fall for his briefing and his summary of the Mission's recommendations.

I would now like to open the floor for discussion and comment by members of the Council.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing a public meeting of the Security Council to consider the overall situation in West Africa. In this regard, we are grateful to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their very useful statements. They both described a situation that has already been set out in a straightforward and lucid manner in the excellent report provided by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

On the one hand, the report shows very clearly that the problems facing West Africa are not only national, but transnational in nature, as the repercussions of the Sierra Leonean conflict fully demonstrate. On the other hand, it clearly identifies the enormous development needs in the subregion and formulates practical, relevant and, we believe, viable recommendations.

I should like, on the basis of those two observations, to emphasize the elements that my delegation believes deserve special attention within the context of our discussion today.

First of all, there is an urgent need to resolve the question of refugees and displaced persons. This matter was clearly set out by Ms. McAskie, and I would merely like to emphasize that we, too, believe that it is imperative to guarantee safe access to refugees and to promote conditions to facilitate their return to safe areas in their countries of origin. In this context, we support the recommendation on strengthening the presence in Guinea and Liberia of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with a view to supporting efforts to meet the growing humanitarian needs in the West African subregion. Neither can we fail to endorse the appeal to the international community and the Governments concerned to support the actions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to facilitate the relocation and voluntary return of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea.

I wish to focus on the need to find lasting solutions with regard to the priority needs and problems of West Africa.

First of all, there is a need for peace. As Council members know, for more than a decade the West African subregion has been convulsed by many conflicts whose repercussions include, in particular, the progressive deterioration in relations between countries in the Mano River Union. I shall not repeat here all the initiatives and actions taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to try to resolve these conflicts. I shall confine myself to stressing the commitment of ECOWAS to finding a comprehensive political solution involving all the countries concerned and their partners. I should like, in passing, to thank Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Fall for speaking about this.

Thus, with regard to the situation in Sierra Leone, it is important — as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1346 (2001) — that all the parties to the Sierra Leone conflict intensify their efforts towards the peaceful implementation of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement of 10 November 2000. That reference is important to us, because we also believe that military pressure is not enough to bring about a lasting solution to the Sierra Leonean conflict and its worrying consequences, in particular the continuation of armed

raids along the borders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

As we know, however, peace is not just the absence of war. There must also be a viable political and economic framework, that is, the construction and consolidation of a State based on law, the promotion of education and health policies and measures to combat poverty — in short, good governance.

In this regard, it is necessary to strengthen security and promote economic development within each country as well as among the countries in the subregion. In this context, it is essential to strengthen the local conflict-prevention capability, in particular through the Mano River Women's Peace Network, which Ms. McAskie mentioned, and, more generally, through the ECOWAS early-warning mechanism, which is designed to collect and process data through offices opened in Banjul, Cotonou, Monrovia and Ouagadougou, and its Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa.

It is also essential to provide the countries concerned with a means of speeding up the peace process, in particular by implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. This was the case in Mali, for example, where, in the wake of an armed rebellion in the north of the country, the authorities helped to integrate former rebels into all areas of the Administration and the national army and to reintegrate them through a new policy of decentralization and the financing of effective development projects.

That notwithstanding, the report of the Inter-Agency Mission sketches out a comprehensive, regional and integrated approach to all these questions, which we fully endorse. We support the recommendation to open a United Nations office for West Africa, which could act as the eye of the United Nations in the area and facilitate useful dialogue with bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as with ECOWAS, in particular in relaunching the peace process and the process of economic development in West Africa.

We are pleased that the report also stresses the need to further develop coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and ECOWAS with a view to establishing a true partnership, particularly given the regional implications of the Sierra Leonean conflict. In this regard, we believe that it would be useful to look further at the ECOWAS recommendation on broadening the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). We must respond positively and specifically to the ECOWAS offer of May 2000 to strengthen UNAMSIL by the addition of 3,000 men, who would have the advantage of knowing the terrain and would be able to deploy rapidly and effectively.

Likewise, the political support of the United Nations — in this case, the Security Council — and the provision of material and technical assistance by the international community are essential for the successful implementation of the ECOWAS initiative to deploy a multinational ECOWAS Monitoring Group force along the borders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

I would also note that close cooperation between the United Nations and ECOWAS is necessary to ensure implementation of the sanctions laid down against Liberia in resolution 1343 (2001).

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for having sent the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa. I also wish to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall and members of that Mission for their important work in the search for lasting solutions to meeting the priority needs and issues of West Africa. We await with interest action on specific measures and recommendations of the Mission's report that are practical, relevant and viable. ECOWAS is ready to play its part in that work.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We have had three very valuable briefings this morning and I, too, am very grateful for those, which were based on some very recent experience of all three briefers in the region. I will go through each in turn, very quickly.

Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno mentioned the good progress made at the meeting between the Committee of Six of the Mediation and Security Council of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) at Abuja on 2 May. We very much appreciate the role of ECOWAS in facilitating that meeting and are very grateful to Ambassador Ouane for his further updating this morning.

I want to say by way of background that the United Kingdom remains absolutely determined and committed to bringing peace to Sierra Leone and its neighbours through its support for the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations and the international community's efforts in the subregion. We have already committed several hundred million dollars to that objective and we are not going to stop looking for a result from that investment in terms of the stability and the orthodox development of Sierra Leone and its neighbours — what Ambassador Ouane referred to this morning as "good governance" throughout the region. We therefore welcome the RUF's renewed commitment at what we call "Abuja II" to complying with the terms of the Abuja ceasefire Agreement of 10 November and its agreement to withdraw from Kambia. The RUF's agreement to allow the Sierra Leone army, in coordination with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), to deploy to the border area between Sierra Leone and Guinea will reduce tensions in that area. It is an important step in protecting the territorial integrity of Sierra Leone and in calming the situation in south-western Guinea.

We hope now to see the immediate reinvigoration of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone and, in this regard, we look forward to hearing the outcome of the meeting in Freetown on 15 May between UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, because that meeting needs to lead to immediate results on the ground. The onus is on the RUF to prove to the international community that it is genuinely committed to peace and we want to see visible evidence soon that the RUF is complying with the provisions of the Abuja agreement of 2 May, namely, freedom for UNAMSIL deployment throughout Sierra Leone to re-establish the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone, immediate disarmament, and the handing back of weapons and ammunition seized from the ECOWAS Monitoring Group last year — something that should have happened six months ago. We hope that it will indeed be complete by 30 May.

I have a couple of questions here for the Under-Secretary-General. First of all, does he think that the trend that he is now observing in Sierra Leone with these agreements and their hope for implementation is in line with our expectations that the situation can improve sufficiently for elections, an essential part of the peace-building process in Sierra Leone, to be held at least within the next 10 months or so? I have a second question of detail as regards the alleged Civil Defence Forces (CDF) attacks on RUF positions in the east of Sierra Leone. Is it actually clear that the CDF were responsible for those attacks, because there is some doubt about the actual events that have taken place? We say that against the observation that the RUF has, of course, consistently failed so far to implement the Abuja ceasefire Agreement.

I am particularly grateful, also, to Carolyn McAskie for her presentation. The United Kingdom remains very concerned about the regional humanitarian situation and sees a strong need for increased coordination. We agree that this meeting exemplifies that. We are aware of the growing numbers of internally displaced persons, especially in Guinea, and think it essential for the humanitarian effort in Guinea to be strengthened by the appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator in Conakry. Is there a date for that? We also need a clearer idea of the number of refugees still to be relocated within Guinea from the conflict zones and a timetable for completion of that exercise. We are interested in the idea of a subregional office for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Are there plans to set that up on a particular timing?

We, too, note in passing her reference to the impressive and senior membership of the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network and we agree with the link which Assistant Secretary-General Fall has made between national reconciliation and the potential impact of such civil society organizations as that one.

I thank, too, Assistant Secretary-General Fall for his briefing and for his leadership of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa. The Mission report presents a vivid illustration of the need for a more collective and integrated United Nations effort, where economic development and humanitarian dimensions are factored into the United Nations system's analysis and response — in other words, a real regional strategy for West Africa. Many of his recommendations reinforce the general findings of the Brahimi report in this context and build on recommendations outlined in the report of the Council's mission to Sierra Leone last October. I have said before that we support the setting-up of an integrated mission task force for that subregion and we hope that this proposal will now be followed up urgently.

Worthy of particular note in his report was the message conveyed to the Mission by the heads of State of the region, who thought that greater subregional integration in the political, security, economic and social spheres should remain a key objective for the United Nations family if durable solutions to conflict and to the tragic humanitarian suffering that accompanies conflict are to be secured. More and more, we are seeing evidence of the need to strengthen regional and subregional institutions in preventing conflicts and developing comprehensive responses to shoring up peace-building efforts. The Fall report underlines this; and yet, we agree with his impression of a recent deterioration in relationships between neighbouring countries in the Mano River Union region. There clearly needs to be more intensive action on this.

The report contains a number of recommendations which affect the operational arm of the United Nations effort in West Africa. These recommendations merit serious and careful consideration and the United Kingdom is already reviewing them. We have noted the report's findings on coordination and strategy and we hope that this important analysis and assessment will be matched by a serious effort on the part of the United Nations intergovernmental machinery to take stock of their implications and to determine how we can best respond collectively to these challenges.

The capacity of ECOWAS as the regional institution is an essential aspect of this. The Fall report calls for the strengthening of ECOWAS in those areas which should better enable it to act as a driving force towards subregional integration and for greater cooperation between the United Nations system and ECOWAS. We should consider how we, as a Council, might develop a more operational relationship within ECOWAS. Here, I hope that the European Union will pay careful attention to the recommendations in this area. It is time, I think, for some individual donors also to see what specific help they can be giving to the regeneration of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as an operational institution.

We welcome the proposal for a United Nations office for West Africa, but it is important that it be complementary to, and not reduce, the flexibility and responsiveness of the command structure of a United Nations mission in the region, such as UNAMSIL. In addressing the appalling humanitarian situation in the Mano River Union countries, the Fall report recommends the expansion of UNAMSIL's functions and mandate. I note that there was no representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the Fall Mission. I have to say that, given the history of UNAMSIL and the need for concentrated action on the security situation in Sierra Leone over the next few months, expansion of the mandate is probably not a good idea at this stage. There needs to be intensive political and diplomatic work to restore the relationships among Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone before we can consider an expanded peacekeeping operation. That intensive work should be taken forward within an ECOWAS framework.

As Ms. McAskie made clear, the humanitarian situation in Liberia is fast deteriorating. It is now more important than ever that President Taylor and the Liberian Government comply with the demands in resolution 1343 (2001). The Council has made clear its resolve to ensure that they do so, and we will need to follow up energetically. We are not yet confident that President Taylor has got the message of the need for 100-per-cent compliance with that resolution. Sanctions will be lifted as soon as the Council is satisfied that its requirements have been met. In the meantime, it is essential to ensure that the arms embargo, the travel ban and the diamond embargo are made to bite. We call on all United Nations Members to fully implement and enforce those measures; it is important that the Liberia sanctions Committee should swiftly designate the list of those subject to the travel ban. We welcome the fact that the expert panel on Liberia has now started its work, and we call on all United Nations Members to cooperate fully with the panel and to pass on to it any information that might facilitate its work. The greater the input, the greater the panel's ability to put together an independent and authoritative report.

We note that the President of Liberia has invited the United Nations and ECOWAS to send border monitors to Liberia. We are sceptical that this would be cost-effective; the border is notoriously difficult to seal. We note that, at present in any case, the United Nations expert panel exists with a mandate to look at Liberian compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. However, once the panel's mandate has expired we will be ready to look at options for a system of checks on Liberian ports and airfields.

We welcome the accelerating pace of United Nations action on this subregion and the evidence of more effective coordination. This morning's briefings make it clear that there is still a huge amount of work to be done. We have enough analysis, enough missions: let us get on with the action.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I join in thanking Mr. Guéhenno, Mr. Fall and Ms. McAskie for their important briefings.

The situation in West Africa, as described in this morning's briefings and in the excellent report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa (S/2001/434), is most alarming. It threatens to grow beyond control if it is not resolved as a matter of urgency, especially because it could spread, in a domino effect, which would endanger the stability and security of the entire subregion, as the Inter-Agency Mission rightly observed.

The exceptional complexity of this precarious situation in terms of security, humanitarian, economic, social and political matters can no longer be addressed through piecemeal, sectoral or ad hoc responses. We have consistently advocated a comprehensive, integrated, multidimensional approach in order effectively to address the many challenges to peace and security, especially in Africa; we endorse the regional approach advocated by the Inter-Agency Mission and by Ms. McAskie, who enlarged on this idea in her briefing. We note too that Mr. Fall stressed the importance of restoring dialogue among the heads of State of the subregion in order to resolve this situation.

In our view, the Mission's recommendations should be implemented with all due diligence in the framework of coordinated joint action among all those involved. In that connection, we consider that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), under the leadership of President Konaré — whom we vigorously support in his sustained efforts to resolve the problems facing West Africa — should be fully involved in any activities in the subregion.

That is why my delegation fully supports the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Mission regarding the provision of assistance to ECOWAS to strengthen its institutional, logistical and financial capacities to enable it to shoulder its weighty responsibilities. The United Nations and the Security Council are in fact called upon to support the initiatives of that subregional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, particularly its initiatives to settle these problems by political means and to put an end to the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that the subregion has long been experiencing.

One of the first measures to take in that connection is to help ECOWAS to deploy an interposition force along the borders of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia in order to ease tension and help the movement or voluntary return of refugees, whose situation remains a matter of concern, in conditions of full safety and security.

The Security Council is actively seized of this matter, and it should focus its efforts on preserving what has been attained in Sierra Leone and on preventing an escalation in the subregion. There are four goals to pursue.

First, the Council should support ECOWAS mediation efforts and encourage the leaders of the three countries to engage in constructive dialogue with a view to resolving pending problems.

Secondly, it should reiterate its appeal to the States concerned to respect one another's territorial integrity, disarm the armed groups that are on their territory, and work to build a climate of trust among themselves.

Thirdly, it should follow closely developments in Liberia, especially the humanitarian crisis that affects hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees. Here I stress the need for regular assessments of the sanctions and of their effects on the civilian population and on the country's economy. We also consider it necessary to establish an independent verification mechanism to supervise the Liberian Government's compliance with the Council's demands; the Liberian Government itself has proposed the establishment of such a mechanism.

And finally, the Council should help find a solution to the grave humanitarian crisis in the subregion and should support the Mission's recommendation that an international conference be convened to mobilize donor support for these countries, and especially for Guinea.

We hope that the working group set up by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Inter-Agency Mission's recommendations can report on its work in the near future.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): We appreciate this important meeting, and we are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator McAskie and Assistant Secretary-General Fall for their valuable briefings.

Assistant Secretary-General Fall's recent Inter-Agency Mission report provides an important framework for addressing the interrelated problems of the West African subregion. It details the need to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to the priority needs of the subregion and a regional approach to conflict prevention.

At last September's Millennium Summit, our heads of State or Government resolved to achieve a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development. The inter-agency report is a significant attempt by the system to play its part and act on that promise. The report shows that the political and the developmental issues faced by the peoples of West Africa are inextricably linked, and that we cannot tackle successfully one cluster of issues without being coherent in our approach to all.

For the United Nations system it is now very clear that peace-building requires the closest cooperation and coordination between all parts of the United Nations system, at Headquarters, in the region and at country level, in particular the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme and the resident coordinator system. Other agencies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Children's Fund and other parts of the United Nations system, can all play crucial roles. The role of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for example, in relation to poverty reduction strategies and debt alleviation, can also be crucial. All parts of the United Nations system play mutually reinforcing roles at all levels. They can add value to each other's work.

As Member States and members of the Security Council willing to assist, we must, as a minimum, ensure an entry point for the longer-term development perspective, both on the ground at a regional level and at Headquarters. We must ensure that the United Nations has clear lines and definitions of authority, and clear organizational structures to deal at the same time with those parts of the region so tragically in crisis and with the long-term development implications for them and for their neighbours. In the past several years the United Nations has had considerable experience in the areas of crisis management, peace-building and development. We can now draw on that experience, as the inter-agency report attempts to do, and learn the lessons on how to do better in the future. We would hope, for example, if a new United Nations office is to be opened in the region, that any deputy or special representative of the Secretary-General would have significant development experience to match the political skills required.

On a national basis, Ireland has increased significantly our funding to the United Nations funds and programmes because we see their role, and particularly the role of the resident coordinator, as crucial in bringing coherence to the approach of the international community in partnership with the Governments concerned. We have also made multi-annual commitments to the United Nations funds and programmes so that their planning will be based on some predictability of funding. The grant aid nature of United Nations development work, in our view, can be a very significant catalyst in the peace-building/development area. The United Nations inter-agency appeal launched this year by OCHA is an example of an integrated subregional initiative which could assist coordination efforts and help bridge the gap from crisis to development. We in Ireland are currently reviewing our aid programme with a view to seeing what more we can do. We support the recommendation in the report calling on the international financial institutions to review the conditionalities relating to financing arrangements for crisis countries. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the subregion must also be borne in mind.

The inter-agency report also makes a number of recommendations on targeted sanctions as these relate to Liberia. The Security Council recently determined that Liberia had failed to provide satisfactory evidence of a wholehearted, genuine commitment to disengagement from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and that, therefore, additional sanction measures would come into effect. We would urge the Liberian Government to provide real proof of a change of policy which would enable the Council to review the

sanctions measures and, in the interim, we urge it to afford its full cooperation to the Panel of Experts recently appointed by the Liberia sanctions Committee.

We are most grateful for the briefing given by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno. There have been encouraging signs that the two-track approach in Sierra Leone — the extension of legitimate political authority and the continuation of dialogue with the RUF to direct the rebels towards a democratic process — is showing some positive results. It is essential that the machinery of civil authority be restored as quickly and effectively as possible in the areas into which the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has deployed. The Abuja ceasefire review meeting on 2 May produced promising commitments on the part of the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. The confidence-building measures proposed by the Sierra Leone Government are welcome. I agree with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno that we are seeing a good first step in the right direction. It is important that these developments be followed through. We are hopeful of further encouraging signs at the meeting scheduled for tomorrow in Freetown.

In this context, I might refer to the inter-agency report recommendation that consideration be given to expanding the mandate of UNAMSIL. We wish to flag that a substantial change to the mandate of a peacekeeping force already in operation presents practical difficulties which we should very carefully bear in mind. However, we would echo very strongly the Mission's recommendation that the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone maintain the two-track approach to the resolution of the Sierra Leone conflict. We, too, are encouraged by the further deployment of UNAMSIL and the pledges of cooperation from the RUF interim leader, Mr. Sesay. But, given the history of the RUF reneging on agreements, we will remain cautious and watchful. We note the extremely positive role that the Economic Community of West African States has been playing in the peace process.

There are also positive indications of an improvement in the level of coordination between the United Nations peacemakers and the development and humanitarian parts of the system. We welcome the opening of the humanitarian office at Kenema. This also is an important step, and we look forward to continued developments in this direction. The appointment of a distinguished Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, drawn from the development community, would appear to be working well. There are obvious lessons to be learned here. I agree fully with Assistant Secretary-General McAskie, that this work will include close coordination with all players, including non-United Nations players; and I note that OCHA's presence may be reviewed upward.

We welcome very much the briefing given by Assistant Secretary-General McAskie. The conflict in the Mano River Union has created a humanitarian crisis with between 1 million and 1.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons in the region. It is imperative that the Governments in the region be assisted in developing the capacity to absorb returning refugees and internally displaced persons when the security situation permits this. In the interim, it is vital that all parties to the regional conflicts permit complete access by the humanitarian agencies to those in need of assistance, as well as safe passage to those same refugees and internally displaced persons. We acknowledge the heavy burdens imposed on countries in the region in accommodating enormous numbers of refugees, in particular Guinea and its people.

We have noted carefully Assistant Secretary-General McAskie's recommendations, including the strengthening of OCHA's subregional capacity and the important potential represented by women's organizations. Assistant Secretary-General Fall also stressed this point.

The three briefings we have heard today illustrate very clearly the need for and high value of an integrated and holistic approach to the priority issues of West Africa and the interlocking efforts required in the areas of development and crisis management.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We, too, would like to express appreciation for the three briefings today by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, Assistant Secretary-General Fall and the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. McAskie, which complement each other and highlight the essential contours of the problems.

We acknowledge with satisfaction the excellent report on the Inter-Agency Mission led by Mr. Fall. We agree that without an integrated region-wide approach to the problems in the Mano River Union countries, sustainable peace and economic and social

development cannot be achieved. Dialogue is essential to this process. At the same time we think the military pressure, particularly on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), has to be continued to achieve the ultimate objective of sustainable peace in the region.

On Sierra Leone we note that while endorsing the results of the Abuja ceasefire review Meeting of 2 May, RUF agreed to withdraw all of its combatants from Kambia, release at least 200 child soldiers by 26 May and return all weapons and equipment seized from the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by 30 May. We have to be watchful that RUF makes good on this promise because their past record is not very straight.

We are concerned that fighting continues in the border areas, destabilizing the entire region. Various armed groups are receiving support and continuing to fight. This has to stop. We are also concerned that reports of ceasefire violations are continuing.

We are satisfied that UNAMSIL continues to be deployed in areas of Sierra Leone that had been dominated by the rebels. We note the enormity of the tasks that the Government of Sierra Leone has ahead of it in that regard. That has been referred to in all three of today's briefings. Clearly, the Government of Sierra Leone needs to be assisted in accomplishing those tasks.

The countries of the Mano River Union also need to remain engaged in order to achieve sustainable peace in the region. All countries in the region should take action to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to prepare and commit attacks on neighbouring countries and refrain from any action that might contribute to further destabilization of the situation on their borders, as the Security Council demanded in resolution 1343 (2001) of 7 March.

We greatly appreciate the role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Chairman, President Konaré of Mali, in promoting peace and stability in the region, as well as the role it played in the recent meeting in Abuja. We support the proposal of ECOWAS to deploy international monitors in the border region and we call on the United Nations and donors to support that initiative by providing ECOWAS with the necessary financial resources and technical assistance.

Despite the recent efforts of the Abuja Summit and the formation of the mediation committee, we regret to note that the leaders of the three countries concerned have so far failed to meet.

During the briefings made today we were also reminded of the importance of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in sustaining peace and security. We cannot overemphasize the role of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. Specific actions need to be taken, both by the countries concerned and by donors, to achieve successful DDR. The Sierra Leone Government in particular has to take decisions to ensure the success of the DDR programme and has to be in a position to extend its authority as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) withdraws from areas it dominates. At the same time, donors must assist the Government in that regard, as that will be critical to the Government's ability to provide former fighters with alternate livelihoods. We particularly emphasize the need to address the issue of reintegrating child combatants with enough care.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation in the region. We appreciate that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to help trapped refugees, especially those in the "parrot's beak" region of south-east Guinea, by transferring them from insecure border areas to camps in the interior. It is also useful that the capacity of the new sites has regularly increased to keep up with the pace of the relocation exercise. We fully support the two-track approach taken by UNHCR with regard to refugees in Guinea, as Ms. McAskie has mentioned. We recognize that the response to consolidated appeals has to be greatly improved.

We are encouraged by the information regarding the release of children abducted by the RUF. We, too, place great stress on ending the plight of girls who were abducted and whose human rights were violated. We also see hope in the role of the Mano River Union's Women's Peace Network in the Union's countries and we call for assistance for their efforts.

The human rights situation in the region continues to concern us. The recent fighting in the border areas claimed civilian casualties and displaced thousands. All parties must abide by international humanitarian and human rights law and end abuses, including killings and abductions of civilians in areas

affected by fighting. In this situation, we note with satisfaction the opening of the human rights office in Kenema.

Today's briefings have made it clear that enhanced focus on post-conflict reconstruction and economic regeneration is absolutely vital. The United Nations system and the international community should support long-term development in Sierra Leone and assist the Government in gradually expanding its administration and services throughout Sierra Leone and in creating opportunities for former combatants to find alternate sources of livelihood.

Before concluding, we would like to note that given the importance of a subregional approach, we would favour the recommendation to set up a United Nations office in West Africa. We will be open to further discussion of this matter.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are also grateful to Mr. Guéhenno, Ms. McAskie and Mr. Fall for their comprehensive information on the situation in West Africa.

The Russian Federation is deeply concerned about the difficult situation that has come about in that subregion, and in particular about the explosive situation on Guinea's borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone. We support the efforts undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to settle this problem on the basis of good-neighbourly relations, a rejection of the use of force and the development of agreed political measures to halt the activities of armed rebel groups on the territory of those States.

A solution to this problem would allow for substantial progress towards eliminating the humanitarian crisis that today threatens the civilian populations of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. That would establish conditions for the safe return of refugees. A personal meeting between the leaders of the countries members of the Mano River Union could be essential for achieving this objective.

In our view, building trust in the subregion could also be furthered by the deployment of a contingent from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to the areas of most intensive activity by the unlawful armed groups. We believe that such an operation should be based on the agreement of all States on whose territories it would be conducted and on the basis of a mandate that includes an enforcement component based on the authorization of the Security Council.

On the whole, the Russian Federation advocates strengthening coordination between United Nations and ECOWAS efforts to settle the situation in West Africa and in averting and preventing conflicts. We are impressed by the proposals in that regard contained in the report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa.

There can be no doubt that the most destabilizing element of the situation in West Africa continues to be the conflict in Sierra Leone. We greatly value the efforts of the leadership and personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to settle this conflict. We note that there has recently been a tangible turn for the better in this area. In our view, this demonstrates the correctness of the strategy, adopted by the Security Council, to combine strong pressure on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) with encouragement for the process to find a political settlement of the conflict. Appeals to retreat from such a strategy would only fan the flames of armed conflict in the subregion.

As progress is made towards a settlement and as State administration expands over the territory now in the hands of the rebels, we expect that the Government of Sierra Leone will step up its compliance with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme for ex-combatants. Those efforts should have the support of UNAMSIL. We agree in principle with arguments put forward in the report of the Inter-Agency Mission calling for a zonal approach to solving problems related to DDR and other aspects of post-conflict peace-building in the Mano River Union region. However, we have some doubts about the appropriateness of expanding UNAMSIL's mandate by extending its activities to the territory of all three States of the Union, primarily because of the differing types of problems that exist in those countries.

We believe that it would be preferable to adopt a policy that would focus on enhancing the coordination of the efforts of the international community, with a key role being played by West African subregional structures.

Of key significance to the settlement of the conflict in Sierra Leone is full compliance by Liberia with the demand of the Security Council that it end its support for the RUF, as set out in Security Council

resolution 1343 (2001). Here I would emphasize that it should end its support, not its contacts, with the Sierra Leonean rebels, within the framework of collective efforts to encourage them to achieve peace. This is the objective of the sanctions with regard to Liberia, and relevant steps taken by its authorities would be duly valued by the Security Council.

We take note of Monrovia's statement on measures adopted in compliance with resolution 1343 (2001) and of its intention to continue to cooperate with the Security Council. We deem valid ECOWAS' recommendation concerning the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of sanctions and Liberia's compliance with the demands of the Security Council.

We call upon all States fully to abide by the provisions of resolution 1343 (2001) to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to prepare and commit attacks on neighbouring countries and refrain from any action that might contribute to further destabilization of the situation on the borders between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the representatives of the Secretariat for their important briefings. I should like also to thank all of the departments and units that contributed to the report that is before us today — that is, the report of the Inter-Agency Mission that visited West Africa last March.

The contents of the report have convinced us that what is needed is a subregional approach by the United Nations system to promote peace and economic development in the countries of West Africa. The report contains a wealth of ideas and proposals which deserve to be fully analysed by the Council. They should also be studied by other agencies of the Organization and by other related institutions.

Today I should like to draw attention to the last paragraph of the report, which discusses follow-up. Perhaps here one could anticipate the work that will be done by the Organization in handling other activities and conflict situations in Africa. It states that following successful implementation of the report, similar approaches should be explored in other parts of Africa. This would certainly be very effective, and, from the budgetary standpoint, it would probably also be much cheaper. It would also be relevant to the advancement of the work of the Security Council itself.

I should like to touch on three points that my delegation considers very important in the promotion of peace and security in the region.

The first point is the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). As we said earlier, we cannot conceive of a regional approach to United Nations operations in West Africa that would not include a broad and dynamic interaction with ECOWAS. The Inter-Agency Mission has made several recommendations, mostly geared towards strengthening the institutional capacity of that regional organization in *various areas, inter alia, conflict management*, promotion of development and electoral assistance.

On this point, I should like to ask some questions. I should like to ask the representatives of the Secretariat about the level of cooperation between each of their departments and ECOWAS. Also, how can we make the dialogue between the Council and ECOWAS more productive? Here I would highlight the very important role being played by the Ambassador of Mali.

The second point I would take up is illicit arms trafficking in the region. The arms trade in itself does not in and of itself give rise to conflicts, but broad-ranging circulation of arms destabilizes Governments and aggravates conflict situations. We have noted in particular the presence in West Africa of hired fighters, mercenaries and uncontrolled militias. The countries in the region have committed themselves to a moratorium on the import of small arms and light weapons.

My questions here are as follows. What contribution have the arms-exporting countries made to the moratorium? Does the Secretariat have any information in that respect? Would it help to draw up an international list of arms traders, and would international weapons-control measures not avoid future expenditures on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes?

My last point relates to the humanitarian crisis. There is concern about "donor fatigue" in connection with humanitarian relief in the region. Various figures have been mentioned, and there have been meetings and conferences in various countries calling for greater resources, but it is well known that donor fatigue exists. There is also "asylum fatigue" on the part of countries that take in refugees. Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire are two recent cases of this, despite their long history of taking in refugees. Furthermore, the number

of internally displaced persons continues to increase with every new outbreak of fighting.

Here my questions are: How could a regional strategy help stop these two kinds of fatigue? What is the local capability to provide humanitarian assistance? And, finally, is it viable to think about a rapid-response capability in the region to deal with the humanitarian crisis?

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for your excellent initiative of holding this very comprehensive briefing on the situation in West Africa — a briefing which has brought together the head of Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno; Ms. McAskie, of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Mr. Ibrahima Fall of the Department of Political Affairs.

As all of those who spoke before me have noted, the crisis in the subregion has many different aspects — political, peacekeeping and humanitarian — all of which are closely interrelated. As has been mentioned several times, the resumed fighting in Sierra Leone has spilled over to the Guinean border over the last few months, which has given rise to humanitarian problems with respect to the situation of Sierra Leonean refugees, in particular those living in Guinea.

Ms. McAskie also noted the recent case of Liberian citizens who want to settle across the border in Sierra Leone as refugees. Thus the interrelationship between humanitarian, military and political problems continues to aggravate the situation. That is why the suggestions made by Mr. Fall in the wake of his Inter-Agency Mission to the region clearly make sense. Anything that will help us move towards an integrated approach to the problems must be considered.

For example, Mr. Fall's proposal to open a subregional office with a special representative in the region is sound one, as is the idea of creating an inter-agency working group in New York. In the same vein, we must clearly strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We are grateful for the initiatives taken by ECOWAS in this regard that have made it possible to relaunch the peace process in Sierra Leone; I will come back to that point later. We also welcome the efforts of ECOWAS to bring together the three heads of State of the Mano River Union countries.

In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the fact that the European Union will itself be sending a mission to the region, headed by the former Ambassador of Sweden to the United Nations, Ambassador Dahlgren, who is now Sweden's Secretary of State. He will lead the mission on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. The mission will meet with all the heads of State in the region, as well as with President Konaré in his capacity as the current Chairman of ECOWAS. The European Union thus supports the peace initiatives in the region.

I should also like to mention two other countries referred to by Mr. Fall: Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. We fully support Mr. Fall's proposals in this regard. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, we should promote dialogue for reconciliation. The European Union has entered into a dialogue with the Ivorian authorities in that regard.

We were very interested in what Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno said with regard to the most recent positive developments in Sierra Leone. Again, thanks to ECOWAS initiatives, the Abuja meeting and the activities of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), there are some positive signals relating to the strengthening of dialogue between UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This is very positive, but, as Ambassador Greenstock said, we must now move on to the implementation of the commitments that have been renewed, and we will follow developments very closely.

One of the commitments undertaken by the RUF and mentioned by Mr. Guéhenno is of great interest in the matter of the return of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. During the Abuja meeting and the Makeni follow-up meeting, the possibility of the deployment of UNAMSIL and the Sierra Leone army in the Kambia district was raised. Mr. Guéhenno referred to the date of, I believe, 18 May, which is in a few day's time. I should therefore like to ask Mr. Guéhenno how UNAMSIL plans to respond to the RUF withdrawal from Kambia. Is UNAMSIL going to be deployed in that district to facilitate the voluntary return of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea who want to use the Conakry-Freetown route that passes through the district of Kambia?

My last point relates to what Ms. McAskie said about the situation of refugees and displaced persons,

in particular the serious situation that is continuing in Guinea, where, as Ms. McAskie said, Ms. Short and Mr. Josselin recently made a joint visit. It is clear that international assistance must be provided to Guinea, as Mr. Fall recommended in the report issued following his Inter-Agency Mission. However, in addition to humanitarian relief, there is the question of the return of refugees. That return must, of course, be voluntary. The return must take place, and the refugees must be taken in, under the best possible conditions.

In this regard, we have received fairly worrying information relating to what has happened in Gueckedou. Ms. McAskie spoke about the different possibilities, in particular the relocation of some refugee camps in that area further to the north. We have received rather disturbing information about the conditions attached to that relocation. Is it true that the refugees have been asked to go by foot, more than 150 kilometres under difficult conditions? Is it also true that to encourage the refugees to move north, they have been given to understand that those who stay will no longer receive humanitarian assistance?

My first question thus relates to refugees in Gueckedou. I have another question, about the refugees who want to return but from the west of Guinea to Sierra Leone. I have been told that, until very recently, there were two boats chartered by the International Organization for Migration that enabled Sierra Leonean refugees who wanted to go back home to do so through the maritime route from Conakry to Freetown. I understand that there is now only one boat. I would like to know why the means of transportation have been reduced for refugees who want to return to Sierra Leone voluntarily.

I have one last question. Resolution 1346 (2001), which we adopted several weeks ago, contains one paragraph — I believe it is paragraph 9 — that requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council a report dealing in particular with the question of the support that UNAMSIL can provide for the voluntary return of Sierra Leonean refugees currently in Guinea. We would like to know when the Council will be receiving that report.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to note that there are still seven speakers on my list, and I am sure that we would like to give our guests at least a brief opportunity to respond to some of the comments and questions that have been posed.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open briefing on the situation in West Africa. Last year's Security Council mission concluded that the highest priority must be given to the coordination of a comprehensive strategy, with clear objectives to address the regional dimensions of the conflict in Sierra Leone. My delegation therefore welcomes the comprehensive report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, contained in document S/2001/434, and the thought-provoking analysis and recommendations contained therein. This report has been very ably complemented by the presentations made today by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who led the Inter-Agency Mission.

The report and today's briefings clearly emphasize the need for an integrated, holistic strategy involving the Governments and people of the States concerned, the United Nations system and the regional and subregional organizations if we are to achieve a sustained and lasting solution to the problems in the region. We agree with the Secretary-General that an integrated, subregional approach by the international community is urgently needed to help prevent the further emergence of conflicts, restore peace and security and promote economic and social development. It is in this context that my delegation continues to support the holding of a meeting between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Such a meeting, which we hope will take place in the near future, could usefully focus on the situation in West Africa. Today's meeting is nevertheless timely, as the Security Council considers what action it can take with respect to its own responsibilities for international peace and security.

I now wish to comment on some of the aspects of the Inter-Agency Mission's report, as well as on the briefing we have received. First of all, I wish to welcome the report by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno on the meeting held in Abuja on 10 May between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), aimed at reviewing the implementation of the Abuja ceasefire Agreement. We

sincerely hope that the commitments made by the RUF will be carried out.

Regarding the further forward deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) into RUF-controlled areas, we have heard from Mr. Fall about criticisms of the United Nations operations and we must again emphasize the importance of the public information activities of UNAMSIL aimed at sensitizing the population about the Mission's mandate. At the same time, the proposal for the expansion of UNAMSIL's mandate into the neighbouring countries deserves our serious consideration.

Second, Jamaica fully supports the recommendation for the establishment of a mechanism for systematic and regular consultations among entities of the United Nations system for defining and harmonizing national and subregional policies. Frequent consultation with ECOWAS and other subregional agencies would be critical to developing cohesive strategies. As was clearly highlighted in the meeting between the ECOWAS ministers and the Security Council in February, there needs to be close collaboration between the Council and ECOWAS in seeking to bring about a resolution of the conflict affecting the West African region.

Third, the establishment of a United Nations political office for West Africa would, in my delegation's view, be a step in the right direction. Such an office could send a positive signal to the West African region that the United Nations is serious about enhancing its capacity and collaboration in the subregion. Such an office must, we believe, be fully staffed to tackle the wide cross-section of issues. This should be done on a regional basis and collocated in Abuja in order to strengthen its linkages with ECOWAS. We also support, as an interim measure, the establishment of an integrated mission task force, which would be a useful mechanism for continuity.

Fourth, my delegation has consistently expressed concern at the escalating conflict in the region. We agree that dialogue among the leaders of the region to devise ways and means to resolve the crisis is of paramount importance, because peace agreements can have little effect if there is no political will to effect a sustained and lasting peace. We would encourage the mediation efforts of the heads of State of Mali, Togo and Nigeria, recently appointed by the ECOWAS summit, and we hope that this meeting will take place soon.

The situation in Sierra Leone and its effects on Liberia and Guinea involving the border areas have escalated into a humanitarian crisis involving thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons. Jamaica supports in principle the establishment of an interposition force along the shared borders of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

We have heard from Ms. McAskie, as well as from Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Assistant Secretary-General Fall, how this crisis has spread across borders. We welcome the initiatives taken by ECOWAS at its meetings last December and in April to address the mounting concerns and we have noted the concrete steps being proposed by ECOWAS. We recognize only too well the dire need for international assistance in terms of equipment and logistics in order to mount a successful operation.

Fifth, Jamaica fully subscribes to the importance of approaching conflict prevention and resolution from a regional, rather than a national perspective. It is disheartening, however, to see that there continues to be a reluctance to devote resources to conflict-prevention and peace-building measures, even though we are prepared to meet the huge costs involved in dealing with situations after conflicts have erupted. It is therefore important that our conflict-prevention strategies should aim at strengthening ECOWAS's capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution and for ensuring security. The need for the development of ECOWAS's early warning capacity is also of importance.

The report of the Inter-Agency Mission mentions that

> "Cooperation between intergovernmental organizations within the subregion with civil society organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and management remains limited and could be strengthened considerably." (*S/2001/434, para. 33*)

It is our belief that civil society plays a pivotal role in conflict prevention and that it should be encouraged. We therefore welcome the initiatives undertaken by ECOWAS in the Mano River basin aimed at developing support for civil society.

Sixth, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants are essential components of the post-conflict peace-building process. It is regrettable that, to date, such a programme in the region has been thwarted, owing primarily to the lack of funding. We are aware that conflicts in the region are often fuelled by economic reasons; war is a lucrative business and, therefore, any incentive to curb the crisis must involve alternative sources of gainful employment. We are particularly concerned about the situation of ex-combatants, child soldiers and girls, of which Ms. McAskie made mention. Adequate and sustained funding should be provided for job training and job creation and for the counselling, rehabilitation and resettlement of all ex-combatants. In this regard, I wish to draw attention to the fact that, in these programmes, we have very often ignored the fact that women are often ex-combatants as well as men. We need to address the specific needs and problems which these women face in the integration process and to determine what steps can be taken to address their psychological as well as their domestic needs.

Seventh, the proliferation of arms in the subregion continues to be of great concern to my delegation. While we fully support the recommendations outlined in the relevant section of the report, aimed, *inter alia*, at strengthening ECOWAS's capacity to monitor and curb the illegal flow of arms, we feel it to be equally important that efforts be undertaken by arms manufacturers to cease the export of small arms to conflict areas.

As I mentioned earlier, women have become increasingly effective participants at the peace table and they have continued to assist in creating an enabling environment for conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. We therefore welcome the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network, which links women from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and we support the request made by Assistant Secretary-General Fall and Ms. McAskie for assistance to be given to that programme.

Last, the flow of refugees across the borders of the three countries has fuelled what can be described as one of the most serious refugee situations in the world. We believe that any solution to this crisis must also involve a regional strategy entailing specific criteria for action. We therefore fully support the two-track approach by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the proposed presence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the United Nations office for West Africa.

We recognize, however — as Ms. McAskie pointed out — that conditions for the full return of refugees to Sierra Leone or Liberia do not at present exist and we are disturbed at Ms. McAskie's reports of harassment and thefts experienced by refugees and internally displaced persons. It therefore must be impressed upon all armed groups that they must provide safe access and safe passage to refugees, internally displaced persons and humanitarian personnel operating in the areas of conflict.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General and the agencies concerned for the initiatives taken to address the situation in the subregion in an integrated manner. We wish to assure the Secretary-General, the men and women of UNAMSIL and the people of the region of Jamaica's continued solidarity and support.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I, too, would like to begin by thanking Mr. Guéhenno, Ms. McAskie and Mr. Fall for their presentations. I would also like especially to thank Mr. Fall for the excellent report that he has submitted to us.

There is one main point that I would like to emphasize in my remarks today: that the Council has got to ensure that, whatever it does, it does in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The main contribution of Mr. Fall's report is that it spells out in great detail the concerns of the region — the concerns I heard when I was there personally — and I hope that the Council will pay attention to the concerns expressed in the report.

At the same time, looking at West Africa, we see a paradoxical situation. The paradox is this: it is a region blessed with excellent reports. Indeed, if you look at the Security Council mission report of last October, Mr. Fall's report and Ms. McAskie's report, you will see that they are excellent reports. But if you look at the contents of the reports, you find lots of bad news. For example, since no one has referred to this, I would like quickly to quote from paragraph 13 of the report:

> "Throughout the Mission's visit the gravity of the political and security situation in the West African subregion and the potential for the rapid spread of insecurity and instability, unless urgent steps are taken to address the causes of conflict and turmoil in several countries, were repeatedly underscored. ... The possibility of a 'domino effect', with instability spreading rapidly from one country to another within the subregion is a source of deep and widespread concern." (*S/2001/434*)

So the question is, how do we deal with this paradox? How do we ensure that the next time we meet we will not just get good reports; that we will get good news from the region? I guess the underlying purpose of my comments today is to help resolve that question.

I would like to make four points. The first point is that, while I think we have received very useful briefings, I wonder whether in those briefings we can balance the details that we receive with more assessment. Having listened to all the briefings today, I find myself — even though I have just visited the region — lost in a forest of details. Can we take a helicopter view of the whole situation to see where we are vis-à-vis where we were in the past? For example, it is useful to remind ourselves that it was just a year ago that soldiers of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) were taken hostage by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). We have clearly come a long way since then. If you look at the military situation within Sierra Leone, it looks promising. But the military situation around Sierra Leone has got a lot worse. Are there connections between the two? What is going on here?

I hope that when we review the situation we will not take just a snapshot view of each situation, but will try to look at the overall trends and see how they are going. For example, if you look at the peace process, again, the peace process within Sierra Leone seems to have improved; there seem to be, as we have heard today, discussions involving UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. But the peace process involving the three countries of the Mano River Union seems to have deteriorated and, as several speakers have noted, talks are not taking place among the three leaders. So how do we piece together the picture?

My second point is on our working methods. Both last month and this month we have tried to improve our working methods to see how we can ensure that as we meet and discuss a problem we add value to it. Perhaps, to add value each time we discuss West Africa, we should begin by asking ourselves: What have we done in the past? What decisions have we made? Which have been implemented and which not? And in the case of those that have not been implemented, why not? In that regard, Mr. Fall's report has brought out many specific criticisms of the United Nations. Indeed, if you read paragraph 112 you will notice that several interlocutors were critical of a number of United Nations policies. The question is: How do we react to those criticisms? And, if we think they are not fair or balanced, how do we respond to them?

At the same time, Mr. Fall's report has also made some specific recommendations we have to deal with. For example, several countries in the region said that the UNAMSIL mandate should be expanded. We have heard remarks here, some in support, some not in support of the expansion of the UNAMSIL mandate. What will our decision be? How do we respond to that request from the region? Here, I hope that we will reflect on these questions that have been brought before us.

My third point is about long-term indicators. One of the most vivid impressions I brought back from my visit to the region was that clearly there are also long-term problems developing in the region. Any good social scientist, looking at the demographics of the region, looking at the number of children being born and the number of children in school, can make projections and can tell that there are problems that will be coming to us five, 10, 15 years down the road. It is useful for us to balance our short-term work with questions related to long-term projections, and to ask ourselves whether the long-term trends are positive or negative. If they are negative, do we have an obligation not just to address the present snapshot situation of the day, but to ask what we can do to make sure that the same problems will not come back to haunt the Council five years or 10 years down the road?

My fourth and final point relates to the question of financing. Clearly, West Africa is a region of high priority for us, and I think that high priority is reflected in the amount of resources and attention we are devoting to it. Clearly, the very discussion we are

having today and the fact that an inter-agency task force was set up show that the Council is deeply concerned about the region. But the concern is best demonstrated by the amount of money we are spending on the region. Here, it might be useful for us to be provided with some statistics so that we can see how we are allocating the funds for the region. For example, I am told that, as a rough estimate, we will be spending $800 million this year on the peacekeeping operations. Possibly, we may be spending up to $100 million over the next three years on the special court in Sierra Leone. How do those figures compare with the amount of money we are spending on the humanitarian side and with the amount of money we are spending on the development side? Is the balance right? If you want to try to find the right long-term solutions for the region, you ought to ensure that, as you allocate resources, you allocate them rationally, on the basis of need and not on the basis of any arbitrary decision.

I hope that the very valuable reports and the very valuable briefings we have had will not be lost and that, when we meet next time, we will come back and try to address some of these questions.

Mr. Wang Donghua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for their briefings, all three of which were very important for the next stage in our effort to find solutions to the problems of West Africa.

The international community, including the United Nations, has made tremendous, successful endeavours to bring peace and stability to West Africa. We are most grateful to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its efforts. The March visit by the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa marked yet another United Nations effort to find solutions to the problems of the subregion. The report of that Mission (S/2001/434) sets out many excellent and practicable recommendations that merit serious study and adoption by the Council. This should be followed up with concrete action.

Now the Council should focus on the security situation in the border area of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and should promptly carry out a study on ways and means to support the deployment of ECOWAS forces along the borders of the three countries and effectively to verify Liberia's compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions so that those resolutions can be genuinely implemented.

The report's recommendation to establish a United Nations office for West Africa is a very good one. Such an office should coordinate the work of the relevant United Nations agencies, of the United Nations itself and of other agencies, along with coordinating cooperation between the United Nations and ECOWAS, to ensure that all action is fully coordinated. The head of that office, in order to deal with day-to-day responsibilities, should more importantly focus on comprehensively resolving long-term problems in this area.

We also support strengthening the presence of the humanitarian relief agencies in this area, because the humanitarian problems are integrally linked with the security situation in the area. Therefore, while resolving security problems, we should also strengthen our efforts to solve humanitarian problems.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): I would like to join the other delegations in thanking Mr. Guéhenno, Ms. McAskie and Mr. Fall for their valuable briefings, which cover various aspects of the situation in the region and give us a comprehensive analysis of the crisis in West Africa.

We have given careful consideration to the report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa and the recommendations contained therein, which, in our view, represent a constructive plan of action for the United Nations system towards developing a comprehensive approach to durable and sustainable solutions for priority needs and challenges of the region.

The recent Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa clearly demonstrated that the multidimensional nature of the crisis in the region demands effective coordination and partnership among the United Nations family, the regional organizations and the other relevant stakeholders. We therefore welcome the submission of the report of the Mission to the Economic and Social Council and its communication to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the World Bank, the European Union and other major multilateral and bilateral partners.

My delegation took careful note of the recommendations of the Mission, in particular those falling within the primary competence of the Security Council concerning peace and security in West Africa. I would like to make a few comments on the specific issues within this area.

We agree with the conclusion that resolution of the conflicts in the Mano River Union area is crucial in any approach aimed at addressing priority needs and challenges in the subregion.

Members may recall that upon return from its visit to West Africa, the Security Council Mission made it very clear there is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for Sierra Leone. This report reaffirms the importance of a two-track approach to the resolution of the Sierra Leone conflict, promoting both military deterrence and political dialogue between the parties to the Abuja Agreement. My country, as it participates in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone, will continue to support this strategy.

We believe that some specific recommendations concerning the resolution of the conflict along the borders of the Mano River Union countries and the expanded role of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) should be further studied by the appropriate departments of the Secretariat. Such an analysis would be particularly useful for the Security Council to act in the most effective way.

We maintain that, in light of the nature of the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian crisis in the region, it is imperative that a solution to the situation in the subregion should be sought by the three leaders of the Mano River Union countries without further delay.

The report raises a number of issues concerning conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and implementation of sanctions, which together with the problems of governance and human rights, humanitarian assistance for the refugees, as well as economic development and regional integration, will constitute important elements of a subregional approach to the problems faced by West Africa.

We are of the view that, in line with the efforts to develop a comprehensive subregional strategy, there should be in place an effective coordination mechanism in the region to implement it. We support the idea of establishing a United Nations office for West Africa as a welcome step towards intensifying collaboration of the United Nations system activities with those of ECOWAS and other subregional and relevant organizations. We entirely agree with the analysis of the Mission that a prime factor in addressing priority needs and challenges of West Africa is effective subregional integration in the political, security, economic and social spheres where ECOWAS has a central role to play.

It is also important for the international community to support and assist ECOWAS activities and initiatives, in particular those related to capacity-building measures for the ECOWAS secretariat, and for promoting mechanisms of early warning and conflict-prevention, as well as law, judiciary and human rights issues and regional economic integration.

In conclusion, we hope that today's very broad discussion with the family of United Nations organs and agencies, relevant institutions and Member States will be a step forward to the successful implementation of a fully integrated and broad-based subregional approach aimed at addressing the multifaceted problems confronting the region and promoting durable peace and sustainable development in West Africa.

The President: I want to note that we are now at 1 o'clock, and I intend to continue this meeting without a break. I ask that the remaining speakers be brief so that we can give time to the Secretariat. I commit myself to greatly shortening the statement that I was going to make at the end of this meeting in my national capacity.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): In response to your appeal, Mr. President, I will try to shorten my statement and will limit myself to making some observations relating to the inter-agency report.

First, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, and the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Carolyn McAskie, for their important briefings this morning. With regard to the report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, I wish to highly commend Mr. Fall and members of the inter-agency team for the comprehensive and far-reaching report. We appreciate in particular the depth and analytical quality of the report. We fully endorse all of its recommendations.

The report confirms beyond any doubt that the conflicts in West Africa must be addressed in an integrated and regional perspective. We believe that is also true of the Great Lakes region, and that we will in due course have to look at possibilities there as well. The priority now should be to develop the necessary strategies to implement the recommendations of the inter-agency report in a time-bound manner. I would like to ask Mr. Ibrahima Fall whether reflection is already taking place in the Secretariat on an implementation plan for the this important report.

Mauritius has always advocated in the Council the need to involve regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. We commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its vision for the maintenance of peace and security in West Africa and for the promotion of economic and social development in the subregion. ECOWAS must be fully supported by the United Nations system and the international community in that endeavour.

Finally, I would like to mention that we are disappointed that the tribunal for Sierra Leone has not yet been established. We appeal to the donor community to come forward once again and support the establishment of the tribunal for Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): I shall also shorten my statement.

Like others, we believe that it is not possible to look at developments in one country without taking the situation in the entire region into consideration. Norway encourages close cooperation within the United Nations system and close contacts between the United Nations and regional organizations. The role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is of particular importance. Norway encourages efforts to strengthen that organization.

Adequate funding is needed for the United Nations to fulfil its obligations in the region. It is therefore with great concern that we note that the appeals for Sierra Leone and West Africa have not received the needed donor support. Norway, for its part, will continue to provide humanitarian support for the international humanitarian efforts in the region. We strongly encourage all Member States to increase their contributions.

Easy access to small arms fuels conflicts throughout the West African region. Preventing the proliferation of small arms is therefore a paramount issue in conflict prevention. Several countries in the region, Mali being one of them, have shown a strong commitment to that important issue. An important factor in reducing the number of small arms is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. We believe that an effective DDR programme is a precondition for the successful completion of the United Nations peace operation in Sierra Leone. However, in Sierra Leone that process is not progressing as expected. We would therefore appreciate more information. If indeed needed, Norway is prepared to consider providing additional support to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), particularly in the field of DDR.

New developments after the Abuja ceasefire review meeting give us hope that the DDR process will now be revitalized. The implementation of an agreement in this field and the possible deployment of the Sierra Leone Army in the Kambia district will be of significant importance for the many internally displaced persons and returnees in the country. If a substantial repatriation and resettlement operation is started, it will be crucial that steps be taken by local Governments, in cooperation with UNAMSIL, to ensure the security of the returning populations and of the personnel of the humanitarian agencies. We also believe that it is of the utmost importance that Sierra Leonean refugees who originate from areas that are declared secure get assistance to leave their internally displaced persons camps and reintegrate into their home regions as soon as possible. However, the demobilization process is moving at a slow pace. The unwillingness of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to let the Government of Sierra Leone rebuild institutions in the new areas of UNAMSIL deployment is a matter of concern, as it is seriously undermining reconstruction and reconciliation efforts.

Developments in the region continue to give us reason for concern. The Security Council and the United Nations as a whole must therefore continue to follow the situation in West Africa closely. We believe that the new sanctions imposed by resolution 1343 (2001) are the result of the emphasis the Council puts on the need to have a comprehensive approach to developments in West Africa. Political stability and development in the countries of the region can come

only as a result of the collective efforts of local political leaders and the international community to build peace and to commit the needed resources to secure economic development for the long-suffering people in that part of the world.

The President: I would now like to make a brief statement in my national capacity.

I will not review all the elements that have been discussed. I think we have a pretty clear idea of the kinds of things that need to be done in West Africa. But I did want to note that we are not talking about a natural disaster here; we are talking about a man-made disaster that was created by the people of the region by and large, many of whom are still there. It cannot be solved outside the region. We need to find a way to support those in Sierra Leone and in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) who are looking for a solution.

The United States is committed to that. We have devoted significant resources to this effort and we will continue to do so. We want to see results on the ground — practical, concrete results — in the areas of humanitarian assistance and human rights. That includes providing the safety required for refugees to return, which has been promised for so long, as well as results in the area of security and in the political field — first and foremost in security, because that is the precondition to moving forward.

We were glad to hear what Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno had to say about the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). UNAMSIL needs to be credible. It is an instrument of the resolve of the international community and the belief that the crisis in Sierra Leone pits an elected Government against a violent insurgency. The goal is, and has to remain, the extension of the authority of that Government.

We found the Fall report very thought-provoking. It addresses many of the concerns that also came up in the Security Council mission report, now more than six months ago. I think we all agree on the need for coordination and integration. That approach is clear, but it is not clear that the right arrangements are in place, or coming into place, even after those six to eight months. We look forward to progress in that area.

We also strongly support the efforts made in the field by ECOWAS to deal with the problems that we have discussed today. Its role is essential.

With regard to the idea of extending UNAMSIL's mandate throughout the region, like the United Kingdom and some others we are doubtful that that is the right way to go. In our view, what we really need at this point is a stronger political process and political effort in the region, as foreseen by ECOWAS and in the tasking of its mediation committee. We hope for results from that effort.

Looking to the future, the United States will not treat victim and aggressor in the same fashion. We will not support a party's abdicating a peace agreement while demanding its protections and privileges. We oppose treating President Taylor of Liberia, who is responsible for the founding and maintenance of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), as both arsonist and firefighter in Sierra Leone. We take note of the sanctions that have come into effect. Like others, we hope for their early implementation, and we hope for early and convincing actions by the Government of Liberia to stop destabilizing its nature and persecuting its own people.

The President: I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall give the floor to our guests to respond to the questions asked and the comments made. Again, unfortunately, I must remind our guests of the hour.

I call on Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: First, I will address the questions put by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom. He asked a factual question on clashes in the east. There have been three series of clashes. The first took place on 19 April in the Tongo area. The Civil Defence Forces (CDF) allegedly attacked Revolutionary United Front (RUF) positions in response to what was perceived as a RUF build-up in the area. The RUF retaliated and dislodged the CDF, which is now based in Lago.

The second series of clashes occurred in Talia, 9 kilometres east of Mano Junction, on 6 May. It was also a CDF operation.

The third ceasefire violation is being investigated by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), further north in the Kono district.

According to press reports quoting the chief of staff of the Sierra Leone Army, operations were carried out by the Donsos — people from Guinea — against the RUF to open up the corridor to return to Guinea. Presently UNAMSIL is investigating those reports and this particular ceasefire violation.

With respect to the elections, are we on the right track? As I said in my briefing, what we have seen is indeed a first step, as is the positive atmosphere at the Abuja review meeting. It needs to be followed, as Sir Jeremy said, by very concrete action on the ground, namely ensuring freedom of movement throughout the country; the surrender of weapons; and active progress — real, substantive progress — in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. I will come back to that in reply to the question posed by the Permanent Representative of Norway. Failing that, all we will have is fine words. If concrete progress follows on the ground, then we will be in a position to exploit the next window of opportunity, which will be the next dry season — that is, between October and May. If at that time there is full deployment of UNAMSIL, if the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone has been established throughout the country, if there is full disarmament of the RUF as well as of the CDF, and if the electoral preparations have been completed, then I think we should, and could, have the elections as anticipated.

The second series of questions was put by the Permanent Representative of Colombia, and I will answer those that were specifically addressed to me, on coordination with ECOWAS. That coordination happens at two levels: at the level of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Adeniji. There are actually frequent consultations at the top political level. There is also participation by ECOWAS in the coordination mechanism that has been established between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, and ECOWAS has a representative in Freetown.

There is also coordination with ECOWAS in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations here in New York. We have sent teams to assist ECOWAS with technical advice at various meetings to prepare for deployment.

Making a broader political point, I want to stress the importance we attach to cooperation with ECOWAS, and I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Secretariat for the efforts of ECOWAS in securing greater cooperation between the key players in this conflict. Without cooperation between those key players, it would indeed be quite difficult to implement a regional strategy. The relative success of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone has been based on the very close coordination in Sierra Leone and on the possibility of implementing the Ceasefire Agreement, as agreed on 10 November last. Lacking such a basis, it is indeed very difficult to foresee any real progress at the regional level.

(*spoke in French*)

The representative of France asked questions on the practical measures that UNAMSIL could take to ensure the return of the refugees to the Kambia zone after the disarmament of the RUF in that zone. I can say that UNAMSIL will first of all carefully monitor the withdrawal of the RUF and the deployment of the Sierra Leone Army. It will step up patrolling in that zone, eventually using a set point of departure, which could be established in Kambia itself.

Ensuring the security of refugees is the responsibility of the Sierra Leone Army, but UNAMSIL will monitor developments, and the humanitarian community will, of course, see to the hosting of those refugees. Let me also add in that respect that we can expect that a significant number of the returning internally displaced persons — about 13,000 — will be coming from Lungi, since a number of people from Sierra Leone had left the Kambia zone for the Lungi zone, which is near the capital, Freetown.

The last question was posed by the Ambassador of Norway on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

(*spoke in English*)

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration does continue, but, unfortunately, at the moment it is down to a trickle, and the issue is really to move in a higher gear to make it substantive, so that the ceasefire, as agreed, is fully implemented. Both UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone are ready to do more in the next phase of organized disarmament. Some funds are available, but more will be needed in future if the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is to be more than bringing people to account and actually reintegrating them into society, which is the real, long-term fundamental issue if we want to

have success in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The World Bank in that respect is likely to convene a donors' conference in the near future. UNAMSIL has the leading role on the ground through the role of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Doss.

The President: I call on Ms. McAskie.

Ms. McAskie: Let me thank the representatives of Mali and Jamaica and the other speakers who have given their support for the strengthening of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). I can assure the Council that these words are actually extremely useful to us, and that OCHA, although it is mostly voluntarily funded, is a Secretariat department and must abide by Secretariat rules and regulations and go through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Fifth Committee and so on to establish posts in the field. So concrete measures of support from the Council on our operations are extremely useful to us in speeding up these processes.

The United Kingdom asked specific questions about the appointment of a humanitarian coordination and the timing of the establishment of a subregional office. On the latter, we are working now to establish a small unit in Abijan that would work on early warning and contingency planning but would also provide a base to an OCHA person, whom we would base in one of the three Mano River Union countries to provide the information and strategic analysis functions and a link to the United Nations Office for West Africa. We are working on that now. The appointment of the humanitarian coordinator is under discussion with the concerned agencies, and we would hope to make it quickly; I cannot give a specific date.

The United Kingdom also asked a question about the movement of refugees out of the Languette. With 40,000 already moved out, we are anticipating that another 30,000 will move in the next two weeks. I will come back to that in response to the questions from the representative of France.

In response to Colombia's question about the relationship of the United Nations Secretariat with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), speaking very specifically for OCHA, although we do not have direct cooperation with ECOWAS on humanitarian delivery, obviously — that is not their role — we are working very closely with them on early warning and, in fact, are assisting them in strengthening early-warning mechanisms.

The representative of France asked some very specific questions about refugee return movement. I can assure him that I think we all agree that this is a major concern. We all agree on the basic principle of voluntary return and on the need for security in the country of asylum, which has often been linked to the question of proximity to borders. As Council members know, there is a paragraph in the Organization of African Unity Convention that refers to an estimated distance from borders, recommended at 50 kilometres. The situation that arose in the Languette proves the usefulness of that particular guidance, and as such the movement of refugees to areas away from the border has been ongoing now since 3 May. It is true that original plans included the possibility of only the able-bodied walking, with the others being trucked. But in fact arrangements have been made to truck everyone out, so people are being driven to the new camps. That is why the exercise is taking slightly longer; it actually would have been faster if they had moved on foot. A major obstacle has been finding the trucks. As to whether this means that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would no longer provide assistance to refugees in the Languette, the answer is, yes, it would not. When we have a major policy with the Government of Guinea and the international community to move them away, an offer of assistance to refugees in the Languette would mean the failure of the project. We cannot offer assistance to the same people in two spots; it is not consistent. That does not mean that those in need of humanitarian assistance within those areas will not be getting some assistance. A number of major non-governmental organizations, supported by the United Nations, will continue to operate in the area — Médecins sans Frontières, Action contre la Faim and Caritas — for example, will continue to offer assistance with our support.

On the question of the slowing down of the boat traffic — yes; there are very few candidates, actually, for return by boat. It is not a deliberate policy of UNHCR or the International Organization for Migration to stop the boat traffic. The population of Forecariah has diminished, but in addition the Guinean Government is trying to encourage refugees to stay

away from Conakry because of the overcrowding there. I believe my colleague covered the point on the Kambia crossing. There is no doubt that the opening of the Forecariah-Kambia route in the future will offer a significant opportunity for the safer and more comfortable return of refugees. Finally, the report being prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with support from OCHA, in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 1346 (2001), should be ready in a few days.

The last question of which I took note was the question from Singapore about juxtaposing the expenditure of UNAMSIL and the tribunal and spending on development and humanitarian aid. Obviously, I do not have a figure for the totality of development and humanitarian aid for the region, because much of it comes from non-United Nations sources. Suffice it to say that for this year, if we add up the funds that we have collected from the appeal for Sierra Leone and the appeal for the region, it totals about $25 million, and we are already well into the month of May. So we will be actively seeking additional support.

Finally, I was very pleased to hear the support for the regional approach. I think we are all aligned on that. But that should not blind us to the fact that solutions must also play out at the country level. In Sierra Leone, the end of war is only the beginning. I think that we have in Sierra Leone a classic example of where the international community, the international institutions and the United Nations need to work together to avoid any question of a humanitarian gap. As I said, this is a classic test case for the international community.

The lesson we have learned in Guinea is that the international community has tools at its disposal to assist refugees and countries in crisis, but not to assist host countries of refugees. Guinea has suffered from this for a long time, and now that it has a humanitarian crisis of its own, we have to look at the link between massive underdevelopment and regional instability.

Finally, on Liberia, the third of the three countries, the deteriorating humanitarian situation is only the tip of the iceberg. Given its long isolation, there is very little capacity in Government, civil society or the international agencies present on the ground. When conditions permit — and I realize that some of those conditions are quite strict — there will be a need for a long-term and in-depth approach to Liberia.

If you, Mr. President, will permit me to do so, I should like to end on a lighter note in our discussion of a serious subject. You referred to the fact that this was a man-made disaster, not a natural disaster. I can assure you that that is one expression on which we are not seeking gender equity.

The President: I will remember that next time.

I give the floor to Mr. Fall.

Mr. Fall: First of all, I would like to express my full agreement with Ms. McAskie's comments that the regional approach should not be a substitute for the national approach. Rather, it should be a complementary way to strengthen the national approach.

Turning to the questions, I will be very brief. As far as the issue of proposing the geographical extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone is concerned, the issue before the Mission was not actually its composition. Its composition reflected all the departments concerned, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General was a member of the Mission. Rather, the issue was about giving fair treatment to concerns expressed in the region by the leaders. It is just for that reason that we thought it would be fair to express those concerns.

Secondly, how do we improve the dialogue between the United Nations and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)? I think Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno has already responded about the different levels of cooperation between the United Nations and ECOWAS. I would like to add two comments: the first is that we should perhaps continue to make better use of those frameworks, and the second is that the Council has already begun a fruitful dialogue with ECOWAS. I think that that can also be improved.

Last but not least, the establishment of the United Nations office for West Africa will certainly be critical to improving that cooperation.

With regard to the role of countries that export arms in West Africa, I recall that paragraph 102 of the report deals with that. It is clearly mentioned that

> "Concerted measures should be taken by the appropriate United Nations organs, including the Security Council, and international and national partners to identify those engaged in the illicit trade of arms to West Africa and to stem their activities." (*S/2001/434, para. 102*)

How can we make sure that a regional strategy can alleviate the double fatigue in humanitarian assistance, both among the host countries and among the international donors? I think that Ms. McAskie might like to respond to this question, which was raised by the representative of Colombia. What I can say is just that it seems to me that, as far as the host countries are concerned, the international humanitarian agencies are already trying to help by including host communities in their humanitarian assistance in order to alleviate their fatigue in supporting the refugees.

The representative of Mauritius asked if reflections are ongoing in the Secretariat on the implementation plan. Yes, we have the interim inter-agency mission task force, which is working every week and devising ways and means of implementing the recommendations, including in terms of human resources; yes, because we have already developed a matrix of the different recommendations; yes, because the report has already been distributed on the ground and to the different partners to request their contribution to the implementation; and, last but not least, yes, because the Secretary-General has already designated the Deputy Secretary-General to coordinate the efforts of all concerned towards the implementation of the recommendations.

Last but not least, several interlocutors raised the issue of cooperation and strengthening ECOWAS and the issue of sanctions against Liberia. Members will note that I did not develop those issues because, first, with respect to the sanctions against Liberia, the Council has already had a meeting that took our recommendations into account; and because, secondly, with respect to strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS, this is really the underlying pattern of the entire report and I did not think it was necessary to underline it again.

The President: I thank all of our briefers today for elucidating their views on the subject. We can all see that there is a lot of work still to be done here and we look forward to cooperating with them all as we move ahead.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.